

# The Nicotine Challenger

Winter 2000

This issue: Licensure

Volume 8, Number 2

## "Addressing Tobacco Project" Becomes Official

It's been over eight years since Addressing Tobacco... began providing consultation and training to substance abuse treatment and prevention programs in New Jersey. During that time, the agency bore the rather cumbersome title Addressing Tobacco in the Treatment and Prevention of Other Addictions. While this lengthy name clearly described the original focus of our work, we found we often referred to the program (verbally and in writing) simply as the Addressing Tobacco Project. And since the scope of our services has also expanded, the broader image generated by the shorter name seemed more appropriate. So we have formally adopted this "streamlined" agency title and welcome its simplicity.

### Substance Abuse Treatment Providers

Please join

the *Addressing Tobacco Project* staff

for a meeting to discuss

the Tobacco and Nicotine Issues  
in the New Licensure Standards

9:30 am - 12:30 pm

at one of several locations throughout NJ

The agenda will include a detailed review of the tobacco and nicotine requirements in the standards, as well as specific suggestions and a timeline to assist treatment programs with the implementation of these provisions. Although the current standards are applicable to residential programs, outpatient service providers may also want to attend to begin preparing for the future. Choose the time and location most convenient for you and call the Addressing Tobacco Project at (732) 846-4338 to confirm your attendance and get directions.

**February 23rd—Newark**

at *Integrity House*

**March 8th—Red Bank**

at *Riverview Medical Center,  
Behavioral Health Building*

**March 15th—Cherry Hill**

at *Kennedy Memorial Hospital*

**March 22nd—Liberty Corner**

at *Bonnie Brae*

**April 5th—Vineland**

at *Hendricks House*

## CHAMPION VS. TOBACCO

### DOUG ZIEDONIS, M.D., M.P.H.

For the past ten years, Doug Ziedonis, M.D., M.P.H. has treated and conducted research with psychiatric patients and those who are dually-diagnosed with mental health and addiction problems. During this time, he became focused on how behavioral health programs can better address tobacco use among these patients. Currently, Dr. Ziedonis is the Director of the Division of Addiction Psychiatry at the Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, Director of Addiction Services at University Behavioral Health Care and serves as Chair of the American Psychiatric Association Task Force on Nicotine.

During his time as a medical resident, he was influenced by Murray Jarvis and John Hughes, both strong advocates of addressing tobacco in treatment. This early influence led to a strong interest in studying smoking among psychiatric patients, an unusual direction for a psychiatrist in the 1980's. Since then, in several settings, he has chosen bold roles regarding tobacco and treatment. He has influenced policy decisions, presented training programs and conducted research concerning smoking and its connection to psychiatric disorders.

Commenting on the AHCPR guidelines, Ziedonis remarked, "Many people can quit on their own, or with a physician's brief intervention, but those with psychiatric illnesses and addiction problems need intensive integrated treatment"

Currently, Ziedonis is working on a pilot program to help the mental health system consistent



ly provide smoking patients information about nicotine dependence and to encourage staff members to address their own tobacco use. "With the many problems staff face dealing with psychiatric and dually-diagnosed patients, there has often been the fiction that tobacco is the lesser problem. This culture needs to change," he said.

Dr. Ziedonis has in particular explored the relationship between smoking and schizophrenia and the interaction between psychiatric medications and nicotine. This often neglected population smokes at a very high rate. In addition, when these patients don't work, don't have a lot of other activities, and feel isolated, their day can become occupied with smoking.

In addition, many of the symptoms that cause individuals with schizophrenia the most discomfort are associated with the stigma of mental illness: asocial behavior, difficulty paying attention, poverty of speech, flat affect. This causes them to have more difficulty in society. Nicotine, a low-level stimulant, reduces some of these symptoms. Since nicotine allows the patient to feel more comfortable, smoking is reinforced.

"There is a great stigma against mental illness," Ziedonis said, "and people are less focused on reducing smoking in this population. It's a public health problem that deserves attention."